

phone exchange, ice factories, etc. A complete system of public schools for both races, several private schools of merit, including the famous Bingham Military School for boys are in operation. Its fame as a health and pleasure resort extends over the continent.

Buncombe county contains 381,388 acres of land, valued at \$3,227,695, and 4,433 town lots, valued at \$3,739,710. The number of domestic animals is 4,086 horses, 1,875 mules, 12,070 cattle, 9,709 hogs and 3,463 sheep. Taxes—State, \$20,543.77; pensions, \$3,766.15; schools, \$27,889.29; county, \$49,189.51. Population—white, 28,640; colored, 6,626; all others, 11; total, 35,266.

BURKE.

Burke county lies southwest of Caldwell on both sides of the Catawba river, which traverses its middle section and drains its entire territory. Its southern flank lies upon the crests of the South Mountains, which here reach an elevation of over 3,000 feet above the sea and send off spurs in a northerly and northeasterly direction almost to the middle of the county. The northern end is elevated upon two of the most massive spurs of the Blue Ridge, Linville and Table Rock, which here rise to an elevation of over 4,000 feet; and from this are thrust out numerous long and rugged spurs and ridges in a southeasterly course. A large part of the territory of this county, therefore, is mountainous, and the average elevation is not less than 1,300 feet. In its middle section are considerable tracts of red clay soils, with forests predominantly of oak, hickory, etc., while the remainder of the county is characterized in this respect by mixed forests of oak, pine, chestnut, etc., with white pine in the mountains of the south and north. The river and creek bottoms are very extensive and fertile, and have light-colored clays, loams, and sandy soils. In the middle section, on both sides of the river, the uplands usually have a red clay soil and oak forests. The other parts of the county have soils of a lighter color, yellowish to gray loams, and forests of the usual mixed character of the region—oak, pine, chestnut, sourwood, dogwood, etc. Placer gold mines are numerous in the South Mountains, and there are several vein mines on the north side of the county. Cotton and tobacco have been added to the list of cultivated crops within a few years, but grain forms the chief crop.

The diffusion of gold through this county is remarkable. It is found chiefly on the south side of the line of the Western North Carolina railroad, and most largely among the South Mountains, on its spurs and among its valleys. The gold area extends into the adjoining county of Rutherford, the placer workings of which have been only surpassed in profit by those in California, and at one time the resort to them was as large and tumultuous as ever animated the immortal "Forty-niners." The quantity of gold taken here between 1832 and 1842 was so great, and the needs of a circulating medium for the convenience of miners and the country around so pressing, that the General Government authorized the issue, by Dr. Bechtler, of Rutherford, of gold pieces of the denomination of \$1.00, \$2.50 and \$5.00 pure gold, without alloy; and so great was the trust reposed in the knowledge